

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS CREDIBILITY ON THE TRAVEL INTENTIONS OF DOMESTIC TRAVELERS IN MYANMAR

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of social media influencers' credibility on the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. Drawing upon Source Credibility Theory, the research focuses on three key dimensions of influencer credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing convenience sampling to collect data from 150 domestic travelers across major travel points in Yangon between 4th and 18th August 2024. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression were conducted to assess the relationships between variables. The findings reveal that all three dimensions significantly influence travel intentions, with expertise emerging as the most influence factor followed by trustworthiness and attractiveness. The study concludes that influencers who provide authentic, knowledgeable, and visually engaging content can strongly shape domestic travelers' behaviors. It recommends that tourism stakeholders collaborate with credible influencers who combine expertise with trust-building strategies to effectively promote domestic destinations.

Keywords: Social media influencers, travel intentions, expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness

Introduction

Publicity is vital in social media influencer marketing, greatly influencing how consumers perceive brands and products. With their large audiences and trusted reputation, influencers are particularly effective at driving purchasing decisions by promoting products. In recent years, social media has dramatically transformed industries like marketing, communication, and tourism. The rise of social media platforms among internet users has given birth to Social Media Influencers (SMIs), who have become highly effective marketing tools (Xu & Pratt, 2018). These platforms are now central to how consumers discover new products, services, and experiences, with influencers playing a key role in shaping audience preferences. SMIs are everyday people who build large followings by sharing their personal lives and engaging with their audiences on blogs and social media. This connection allows them to seamlessly integrate paid advertisements into their content (Ye et al., 2021). In the tourism industry, influencers are particularly influential, helping shape travel perceptions and intentions by providing followers with authentic experiences, recommendations, and reviews. Their engaging content and relatable, trustworthy personas can significantly impact consumer behavior, especially when it comes to travel decisions.

To better understand the influence of SMIs, Source Credibility theoretical offers a valuable framework. According to this theory, an influencer effectiveness is based on three key dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise is the perceived level of knowledge or competence an influencer holds in a specific field. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, is tied to the influencer perceived honesty and integrity. Finally, attractiveness goes beyond physical appearance to include likability and the emotional connection the influencer builds with their audience. Together, these factors shape the

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influencer's overall credibility, which in turn impacts their ability to influence audience behavior, including their travel decisions.

In Myanmar, domestic tourism has seen steady growth, with many travelers now using social media for travel inspiration and information. Influencers have become increasingly important in this space, sharing curated content that showcases local destinations, accommodations, and activities. However, how much the credibility of these influencers actually affects the travel intentions of Myanmar domestic travelers is still largely unexplored. Understanding this dynamic is important, especially since the way influencer credibility is perceived may differ across various cultural and social contexts. For instance, domestic travelers in Myanmar might prioritize different factors like expertise, trustworthiness, or attractiveness compared to other audiences.

This study aims to examine the effect of social media influencers credibility on the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. By focusing on key dimensions of credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness within the context of the tourism industry, this research seeks to uncover how these factors drive travel behavior in Myanmar unique cultural and social setting. The insights gained from this study will be valuable for both tourism stakeholders and influencers, helping them harness the power of social media to more effectively promote domestic tourism.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the effect of social media influencers credibility on travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar.
2. To analyze which social media influencers credibility is the most influence on travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar.

Scope and Method of the Study

This study focused on analyzing the effect of social media influencers credibility on the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. This study specifically targeted domestic travelers who are residents of Myanmar and actively use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. To achieve objectives of the study, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were utilized. A quantitative research was employed. The sample size consisted of 150 domestic travelers from 4th August to 18th August 2024 were taken by using a convenience sampling method. Secondary data sourced from books, articles, official reports, annual reports, and other scholarly publications was gathered from libraries, online databases, and academic journals.

Literature Review

The rise of social media has fundamentally changed how people engage with brands, particularly in industries like travel and tourism. Social media influencers (SMIs), with their significant followings and established credibility play a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions, including travel preferences and destination choices. This review explores the effect of influencer credibility on the travel intentions of domestic tourists in Myanmar shedding light on how factors shape their travel planning and decision-making processes.

Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

Social media and social media influencers (SMIs) play a crucial role in shaping our everyday experiences, as noted by Fayez et al. in 2022. These influencers are typically online figures who attract substantial followings on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and personal blogs, possessing the ability to influence the opinions and actions of their audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019). They are also known by various titles, including social media stars, creators, micro-celebrities, and online personalities (Gaenssle & Budzinski, 2020). Researchers have classified SMIs according to several criteria, including audience size, content type, platform utilized, nature of activities, and level of professional expertise. Such classifications are essential for comprehending the extent and nature of the influence these individuals exert, as examined in studies by Wielki (2020). The travel and tourism sectors have capitalized on the influence of SMIs to bolster their branding efforts and draw in tourists. Major international hotel chains and various destination management organizations have effectively employed SMIs to enhance the perception of travel destinations, resulting in heightened tourist satisfaction, increased repeat visits, and successful word-of-mouth marketing, as evidenced by research conducted by Mokhare et al. (2021).

Source Credibility Theory

Source Credibility Theory originally rooted in communication and psychology has been adapted to assess the credibility of influencers. It suggests that the effectiveness of a communication is largely determined by the perceived credibility of the source which is evaluated based on three key dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Hovland et al., 1953). Credibility is defined as the perceiver judgment of a communicator's believability (Kwiatek et al., 2021). Ohanian (1990) developed the source credibility model to assess the credibility of celebrity endorsers by measuring these three dimensions. More recently, researchers have begun applying the source credibility model to evaluate the credibility of social media influencers (SMIs) (Saima & Khan, 2020; Kalu, 2021). The perceived credibility of SMIs has been shown to positively impact their followers purchase intentions, attitudes toward recommended brands, and brand loyalty (Hussain & Ali, 2021).

Hovland et al. (1953) define expertise as the "extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions," referring to the knowledge, experience, or skills an endorser possesses. Additionally, the expertise of a celebrity endorser should align with the product they promote (Till & Busler, 1998). Through the internalization process, consumers are more likely to purchase complex and expensive products endorsed by experts. This reflects the endorser's ability to make credible claims in a specific area of knowledge based on their experience, familiarity, and ongoing engagement in that field (Saima & Khan, 2020). Endorsers with a higher level of expertise are found to have a greater impact on consumers buying intentions (Chekima et al., 2020). Social media influencers perceived as experts exert a stronger influence on their followers' behaviors (Lim et al., 2017). Furthermore, both brand attitudes and purchase intentions are positively influenced by an SMI's level of expertise (Hussain & Ali, 2021).

Trustworthiness is a key component of the source credibility model and refers to the perceived honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness of a source as judged by its audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Social Media Influencers (SMIs) invest considerable effort in building and maintaining positive relationships with their followers to enhance their perceived trustworthiness (Al Qatami, 2019). Influencers who consistently focus on one primary topic tend to be viewed as more trustworthy by their followers compared to those who cover a wide range of subjects (Rahmah & Ren, 2019). Additionally, the ethnicity of an endorser can influence the perceived trustworthiness of SMIs (Nascimento, 2019). Research has shown that consumers' attitudes toward blogger recommendations are significantly shaped by the perceived trustworthiness of the blogger, which, in turn, affects their intention to purchase the recommended products (Grace & Ming, 2018).

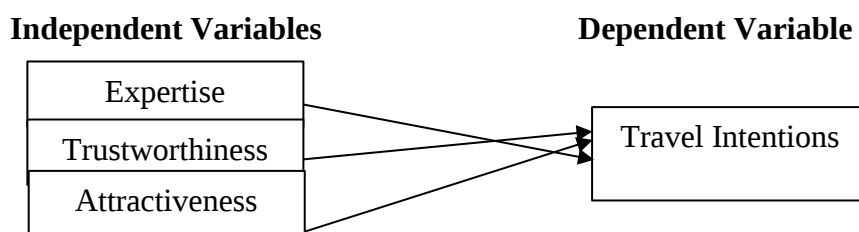
Attractiveness is another key element of the source credibility model encompassing a person's positive traits whether physical, personal, or athletic (Al Qatami, 2019). Attractiveness is considered a significant factor in determining the effectiveness of an endorser (Van der Walldt et al., 2009). For social media influencers (SMIs), maintaining authenticity and posting frequently are two strategies that can enhance their attractiveness and draw more attention from followers (Håkansson et al., 2020). SMI attractiveness plays a crucial role in fostering positive attitudes among consumers (Lim et al., 2017). Additionally, the perceived attractiveness of SMIs has been shown to positively influence audience behaviors, including word-of-mouth promotion, purchasing intentions and attitudes towards the influencers themselves (Taillon et al., 2020).

Travel Intentions

Travel intentions refer to an individual predisposition to travel to a specific destination within a certain timeframe (Ajzen, 1991). Various academic definitions have been offered to describe the term "travel intentions." Luo and Lam (2020) define it simply as an individual desire to travel. Makhdoomi and Baba (2019) further describe travel intentions as the result of a mental process that leads to action translating motivation into behavior. They emphasize that it serves as a critical intermediary between motivation and actual travel behavior. Additionally, Caraka et al. (2022) noted that the travel intentions of potential tourists can be influenced by social media influencers (SMIs) confirming that SMIs can significantly shape travel decisions. Negm and El Halawany (2020) found that both the attractiveness and trustworthiness of SMIs affect consumers intentions to plan vacations. Similarly, the attractiveness of vloggers has been shown to positively influence viewers travel intentions (Chen et al., 2021). Finally, the perceived expertise of influencers in specific areas enhances consumer trust and impacts their behavioral intentions including travel plans (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 1, as outlined in the literature review above.



Source: Ohanian, 1990

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Figure 1 was structured base on Ohanian Model of source credibility. The social media influencers credibility included Expertise, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness and Travel Intentions was the dependent variable. Based upon the literature review, regarding the tourism papers, the working definitions in this study are disclosed as follows:

Expertise: Expertise in social media influencers encompasses the combination of perceived knowledge, experience, qualification, and skillfulness.

Trustworthiness: Trustworthiness of a social media influencer refers to the perceived integrity, dependability, and honesty they exhibit, which collectively contribute to their audience's confidence in them.

Attractiveness: Attractiveness of a social media influencer encompasses a broad spectrum of attributes that contribute to the overall appeal and likability of an influencer to their audience. This appeal extends beyond physical appearance to include personality traits and communication style.

Travel Intentions: Travel intentions refer to the measurable likelihood or predisposition of individuals to engage in travel to a specific destination within a defined period. This concept encapsulates the planned or expected future behavior related to travel, influenced by a combination of personal desire and practical feasibility.

Methodology

This study was conducted with the objectives of analyzing the effect of social media influencers credibility on the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. The study on domestic travelers in Myanmar had limitations in participant sampling. Although it aimed to gather data from residents of Myanmar from various divisions and states, not all domestic travelers could be included due to logistical constraints. The study was designed to focus on domestic travelers who visit to Yangon from various states across Myanmar, specifically targeting those who are active users of social media. Prior to participation, screening questions were administered to ensure the eligibility of respondents. Since, the target population is unknown, Cochran (1963) formula was used to determine the sample size. After calculated the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Cochran formula, the numbers of sample were 150 persons by using convenience sampling method at five major destination points such as Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Sule, Hledan, Inya Lake and Aung Mingalar Bus Station to obtain reliable of data. Questions were created in easy and simple meanings to understand all level of domestic travelers. This quantitative information was measured by using five-point Likert scale (from one

to five such strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, neutral=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5) and applied by descriptive analysis and regression analysis. Applicable journals, previous research papers and websites were referenced for secondary data.

Cochran's Sample Size Formula,

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times p \times q}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.08)^2}$$

$$n \cong 150$$

Where,

n = the sample size

z = 95% confidence level, 1.96

e = margin of error, 0.08

p = the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, 0.5

q = 1-p = 1-0.5 = 0.5

Analysis and Results

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of 150 domestic travelers in Myanmar are analyzed in this survey to analyze the effect of social media influencers credibility on the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. This section includes profiles of the respondents such as gender, age, marital status, education, occupation and monthly income. The demographic profile of respondents is shown in following Table (1).

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Sr No.	Particular		No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
Total			150	100
1.	Gender	Male	65	43.4
		Female	85	56.6
2.	Age	Under 20 years	45	30.0
		20 – 29 years old	38	25.4
		30 – 39 years old	27	18.0
		40 – 49 years old	20	13.3
		50 – 59 years old	15	10.0
		60 years old and above	5	3.3
3.	Marital Status	Single	78	52.0
		Married	72	48.0

Sr No.	Particular		No. of Respondents	Percent (%)
Total			150	100
4.	Education	Lower than Bachelor’s degree	53	35.3
		Bachelor’s degree	85	56.6
		Master’s degree	10	6.0
		Ph.D	2	1.3
5.	Occupation	Student	53	35.3
		Unemployed	13	8.6
		Employed	79	52.6
		Retired	5	3.3
6	Income (Monthly)	Under 200,000 Ks	54	36.0
		200,000 – 400,000 Ks	62	41.3
		400,001 - 600,000 Ks	20	13.3
		600,001 – 800,000 Ks	7	4.6
		800,001 – 1,000,000 Ks	5	3.3
		Over 1,000,000 Ks	2	1.3

Source: Survey data (2024)

Table (1) showed the profile of respondents of the study. In terms of gender distribution, 43.4% of respondents were male, while 56.6% were female. The age of respondents was distributed across several groups: 30% were under 20 years old, 25.4% were between 20 and 29, 18% were aged 30 to 39, 13.3% were between 40 and 49, 10% were aged 50 to 59, and 3.3% were 60 years or older. Regarding marital status, 52% of respondents were single, and 48% were married. The respondents also had diverse educational backgrounds: 35.3% had education levels below a bachelor's degree, 56.6% held a bachelor's degree, 6% had a master's degree, and 1.3% held a Ph.D. In terms of occupation, the data revealed that 35.3% of respondents identified as students, 8.6% were unemployed, 52.6% were employed, and 3.3% were retired. When examining monthly income, 36% of respondents earned less than 200,000 Ks, 41.3% earned between 200,000 and 400,000 Ks, 13.3% earned between 400,001 and 600,000 Ks, 4.6% earned between 600,001 and 800,000 Ks, 3.3% earned between 800,001 and 1,000,000 Ks, and 1.3% earned over 1,000,000 Ks.

Social Media Influencers Credibility on Travel Intentions

This study examined the effect of social media influencers credibility on travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the effect of social media influencers credibility on travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. The perceptions of social media influencers credibility were presented in Table (2).

Table 2 Perceptions of Social Media Influencers Credibility

Sr No.	Items	Mean
1.	Expertise	3.91
2.	Trustworthiness	3.81
3.	Attractiveness	3.83

Source: Survey data (2024)

The findings indicated that among the three dimensions of social media influencers credibility, expertise ranks highest with a mean value of 3.91, suggesting it was the most significant factor influencing respondents' perceptions. Attractiveness followed closely with a mean score of 3.83; although valued, its influence was slightly lower than that of expertise. Trustworthiness, while receiving the lowest mean value of 3.81, continued to play an important role, highlighting that honesty and reliability were crucial elements of an influencer's overall credibility. The mean values regarding to the travel intentions were presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Mean Values of Travel Intentions

Sr No.	Items	Mean
1.	Travel recommendations from social media influencers are used to plan my trips.	3.78
2.	Travel intentions are influenced by the content shared by social media influencers.	3.71
3.	The travel experiences of social media influencers serve as motivation to visit new places.	4.08
4.	Knowing about this influencer's expertise in travel, I am more likely to visit destinations they recommend within Myanmar.	3.92
5.	Trust in an influencer's accurate travel content increases the likelihood of planning a trip based on their suggestions.	3.92
6.	The attractiveness and likability of this influencer make the destinations they visit more appealing to travel.	3.73
Overall Mean		3.86

Source: Survey data (2024)

Table 3 showed the mean values of the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. The highest mean score, recorded at 4.08, is attributed to the statement that the travel experiences shared by social media influencers serve as motivation to visit new places. This indicated a strong influence of influencers' experiences in inspiring respondents to explore new destinations, highlighting the inspirational value of such content. The statement that travel intentions were significantly influenced by the content shared by social media influencers received the lowest mean score at 3.71. Although this suggested that such content does impact travel planning, it implies that it may not be the most decisive factor for respondents when forming travel intentions. The overall mean score, derived from averaging these values, would typically indicate the general effectiveness of influencers in shaping travel behaviors and

decisions. The overall mean score for the survey held at 3.86, reflecting a generally positive perception of influencers' effect on travel intentions.

Table 4 Correlation Analysis and Reliability of Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Expertise	Trustworthiness	Attractiveness
Expertise	0.85	1		
Trustworthiness	0.82	0.735***	1	
Attractiveness	0.78	0.620***	0.590***	1

**p value is significant at 1%.

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The data revealed strong reliability in the measurement of the variables, with Cronbach's Alpha values indicating excellent internal consistency for expertise (0.85) and trustworthiness (0.82), and acceptable reliability for attractiveness (0.78). The correlation analysis showed a robust positive relationship between expertise and trustworthiness ($r=0.735$, $p=0.000$), suggesting that greater perceived expertise leads to higher trust in influencers. Additionally, a moderate positive correlation existed between expertise and attractiveness ($r=0.620$, $p=0.000$), as well as between trustworthiness and attractiveness ($r=0.590$, $p=0.000$), indicating that these dimensions of influencer credibility were interrelated. Overall, expertise emerged as a pivotal factor that significantly influences perceptions of both trustworthiness and attractiveness, with all correlations being statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

This study utilized a multiple linear regression in order to analyze the effect of the independent variables (trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise of social media influencers credibility) on a dependent variable (travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar). The results were shown in table 5.

Table 5 The Effect of Social Media Influencers Credibility on Travel Intentions of Domestic Travelers in Myanmar

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	0.097	0.181		0.534	0.594
Expertise	0.395***	0.070	0.393	5.683	0.000
Trustworthiness	0.347***	0.072	0.338	4.781	0.000
Attractiveness	0.233***	0.069	0.247	3.383	0.001
R	0.895				
R Square	0.801				
Adjusted R Square	0.796				
F-test	152.870***				

***p value is significant at 1%.

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table 5 showed that the credibility dimensions, including expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness, significantly affect the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar. The regression coefficients (B) for expertise and trustworthiness were 0.395 and 0.347, respectively, with p-values of 0.000, indicating statistical significance. Attractiveness also had a significant effect with a regression coefficient (B) of 0.233 and a p-value of 0.001. The model's overall significance is supported by an R-squared value of 0.801 and F-statistic of 152.870, demonstrating the variance in travel intentions of domestic travelers and the model is statistically significant. Following the results illustrate that trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise significantly contribute to the dependent variable, with expertise being the most influential factor.

Findings and Discussions

The survey which gathered data from 150 individuals showcases a varied demographic characteristic, characterized by a gender distribution of 43.4% male and 56.6% female, along with a broad spectrum of age groups, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, occupations, and income levels. This diversity provides a comprehensive framework for assessing how social media influencers effect travel intentions in Myanmar. The data highlights an almost balanced marital status ratio and reveals a significant inclination towards respondents with at least a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the income figures show that most respondents earn between 200,000 Ks to 400,000 Ks, positioning the average participant within a moderately sized economic bracket.

The findings show that among the three key dimensions of social media influencer credibility, expertise ranked the highest with a mean score of 3.91, making it the most influential factor in shaping respondents' perceptions. Attractiveness followed with a 3.83 average, indicating its importance but slightly lesser impact than expertise. Trustworthiness, while receiving the lowest score of 3.81, remained crucial, emphasizing the role of honesty and reliability in an influencer's credibility. The overall mean score of 3.86 reflects a generally positive perception of influencers impact on travel intentions.

Regression analysis further quantifies the impact of these attributes, showing significant coefficients for expertise (0.395), trustworthiness (0.347), and attractiveness (0.233), all indicating positive effects on travel intentions with high levels of statistical significance. The model explains a substantial 80.1% of the variance in travel intentions (R-squared = 0.801), with an F-statistic of 152.870 affirming the model's robustness. This analysis not only confirms the importance of these attributes in influencing travel intentions but also highlights expertise as the most critical factor, suggesting that influencers who are perceived as knowledgeable and reliable are particularly effective in shaping travel behaviors. This comprehensive analysis reflects the considerable influence of social media influencers in the travel sector, particularly within the context of an increasingly digital and interconnected global travel marketplace.

Recommendations

The survey findings clearly demonstrate that expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness collectively shape the travel intentions of domestic travelers in Myanmar with expertise emerging

as the most influential factor. These dimensions are interconnected and should not be viewed in isolation; rather, they should be strategically integrated to enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the tourism sector.

Expertise serves as the foundation for establishing influencer credibility and significantly influences travelers decision-making. Influencers who are perceived as knowledgeable and provide well-researched, practical, and insightful travel information exert a stronger impact on prospective travelers. Therefore, travel brands and tourism organizations should prioritize collaborations with influencers who possess destination-specific knowledge and the ability to function as trusted travel advisors. These influencers should be encouraged to develop content that goes beyond visual inspiration by incorporating comprehensive itineraries, information on hidden attractions, and culturally enriching experiences. Such content enables influencers to position themselves as authoritative sources, thereby enhancing their persuasive power. To support this, tourism stakeholders can implement training programs and workshops aimed at improving influencers' understanding of local destinations, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism practices. This investment in capacity building will strengthen influencers' expertise and ensure that their recommendations are both credible and valuable.

Trustworthiness acts as a critical reinforcing mechanism that converts interest into actual travel behavior. In an era where audiences increasingly value transparency and authenticity, influencers who share genuine, unfiltered experiences are more likely to cultivate long-term trust with their followers. Rather than focusing exclusively on highly polished or overtly sponsored content, influencers should present balanced narratives that include both positive and realistic aspects of their travel experiences. Travel brands can benefit by establishing long-term partnerships with influencers known for their honesty and integrity. Encouraging influencers to provide detailed cost breakdowns, personal reflections, and information can foster a deeper connection with audiences and strengthen the credibility built through expertise. In this way, trustworthiness complements expertise, ensuring that information is not only accurate but also perceived as sincere and reliable by travelers.

Although attractiveness was found to be less influential than the other two dimensions, it remains a vital supporting factor in capturing initial audience attention. In the visually driven landscape of social media, high-quality and aesthetically pleasing content continues to play a significant role in stimulating travel interest. However, its effectiveness is maximized when it is embedded within meaningful narratives that address the practical and emotional needs of audiences. Influencers should strive to balance striking visual elements with actionable travel guidance, ensuring that aesthetics enhance rather than overshadow their credibility. Furthermore, considering Myanmar's diverse demographic profile including variations in age, education, and income, tourism stakeholders should collaborate with influencers who can effectively resonate with different audience segments. This inclusive approach ensures that influencer content remains accessible, relevant, and impactful across a wide range of domestic travelers.

Finally, to optimize the impact of influencer marketing, a strategic and integrated approach should be adopted. Expertise should serve as the core element, supported by trustworthiness and complemented by attractiveness. Tourism organizations should select

influencers who not only have proven experience and knowledge but also demonstrate authenticity and strong visual storytelling skills. Collaborative campaigns could involve influencers producing verified travel guides, sharing itineraries, or conducting live Q&A sessions to highlight their expertise, while maintaining transparent communication and high production quality. By aligning these three dimensions in a cohesive strategy, travel marketers can maximize influencers' ability to shape travel intentions, inspire trust, and engage diverse audiences.

Contributions of the Study

The study makes significant contributions to understanding the role of social media influencers in shaping travel intentions, particularly within Myanmar's expanding travel market. One of its most notable contributions is the identification of influencer expertise as the most influential factor in shaping travel behavior. By demonstrating that travelers are more likely to be guided by influencers who offer detailed, credible, and practical information, the study directs the travel industry toward selecting influencers who can serve as trusted advisors. This finding underscores the importance for travel brands to prioritize influencers who possess not only visual appeal but also in-depth knowledge, ensuring that their content resonates with audiences in a way that effectively influences travel decisions.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the crucial role of trustworthiness and authenticity in enhancing audience engagement and influencing travel intentions. By revealing that honest and transparent content fosters stronger connections with followers, the study suggests that influencers who share genuine experiences are more likely to inspire tangible travel actions. This insight provides a strategic framework for brands to cultivate long-term relationships with influencers who prioritize authenticity. Furthermore, the study's comprehensive examination of demographic diversity offers valuable insights for creating content tailored to various audience segments, ensuring that influencer marketing campaigns are both inclusive and impactful. This framework enables brands to develop digital marketing strategies that are not only effective but also attuned to the diverse needs of Myanmar's travel market.

Suggestions for Future Studies

Future research should explore how different social media platforms influence travel intentions, as platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok offer unique content formats and user dynamics. Understanding how influencer effectiveness varies across these platforms could help identify the most effective mediums for promoting travel in Myanmar. Additionally, comparing user-generated content with professional influencer content may provide valuable insights into which type of digital content holds greater influence over travel decisions. Another important area of study would be the long-term effects of influencer marketing on travel behavior, investigating whether influencer content fosters sustained interest or leads to repeat visits. Cross-cultural comparisons between Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries could further clarify how cultural differences impact influencer effectiveness. Emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) offer promising avenues for influencer marketing, potentially engaging audiences through more immersive and interactive experiences that shape travel decisions.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that social media influencers have a strong effect on the travel intentions of domestic tourists in Myanmar, with expertise emerging as the most influential factor. Influencers who provide accurate, credible, and practical travel advice significantly shape travelers' decisions. While trustworthiness and attractiveness also contribute, they are slightly less influential compared to expertise. This highlights the need for travel brands to collaborate with influencers who not only create visually appealing content but also deliver reliable and helpful information, boosting the overall efficiency of social media as a marketing tool in the tourism sector.

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